

WATCH COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 1278
19 February 1975

25X1A9A

Chairman:
Convened:
Steno :

[Redacted]

25X1A9A

[Redacted]

Okay, let's go. I'm sorry I'm late.

Mr. Chairman, we would like to take up the Cambodian paragraph first and have it at the head of the report. We have our principal DIA expert on the Cambodian situation here with [Redacted] today, the regular man, and he is very busy so we would like to get into that in addition to our feeling that this should be at the head of the report.

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[Redacted]

The same as last week—

es.

Any objection to that? All right, fine. We start with Cambodia then. You have a new paragraph?

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[Redacted]

Yes, we have done more work on it since this morning and we believe our judgment is stronger than the one which we have at the table here.

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[Redacted]

Right. I have one question on "immediate." What do you mean by "immediate operations"? "Current operations" or—

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[Redacted]

The one that is going on right now.

: The current one.

Well we had "current" in there to start with but we think "immediate" says more specifically that it is right now. Yes, there's a slight difference there.

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[REDACTED]

of the airfield? What's our judgment there? What might happen to it?

Observer: Well I think we feel that the KC are aware that the airlift has been expanded and they will attempt to try to disrupt the FANK that is in there if they can, but we don't think that they stand an excellent chance of doing that in the next week or so or even in the near future. There are forces around the airfield but we don't feel that it is any type of attack that FANK can't handle that will be launched in the near future. The most significant threat of any kind of a breakthrough I think would be in the northwest in the 7th Division area

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[REDACTED] Could I return then to the last sentence of the original draft -- "If the Communists continue to control the river and are able to close Pochentong airfield, it would almost certainly bring about the fall of the Cambodian Republic." Is that a useful sentence to add on to your new paragraph?

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[REDACTED] We don't think so; no, sir. In a sense, it is a truism. I have just been told that they are not going to close the airfield within the next week.

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[REDACTED] That's right. So saying that, we think it gives undue attention to talking about Pochentong and for someone who reads it rather quickly, we don't think it performs a useful function.

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Mr. [REDACTED] All right. Irrespective of the report, how do you feel about the timing of this? When do they have to open the river -- is there any rough estimate on it? I guess there are a lot of variables here.

Observer: It probably will be some time early next month or the first half of next month before they start running into severe difficulties as far as shortages of POL and fuel—

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[] Is it your judgment that the KC can't disrupt the airlift, and are you saying this week or so that they are going to be able to protect that airfield?

Observer: We are saying that we expect them to; we are not saying that it is beyond the realm of possibility that if they massed all their forces that they couldn't make a lucky hit on an airfield or get a round in there that might cause some damage, but we don't expect them to be able to disrupt air traffic within the next week.

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III. Southeast Asia

Para 3

We have two revisions proposed, both going slightly different ways. Are they reconcilable?

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[] Well I think we disagree a little bit with you, Mr. Chairman. I think we are going generally in the same direction. Jay is saying "possibly including a Communist attempt on Tay Ninh Province and Tay Ninh City." We think it is likely. We're saying it first as Jay does -- "In South Vietnam, stepped-up fighting is likely to occur" -- heavy attacks -- and then we're saying, in particular, we expect activity in the Tay Ninh Province and that's really what Jay is saying in there, although he didn't come down hard. Some of our people wanted to come down harder than "possibly."

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[] CIA: We were just trying to economize on words from the NIC draft but we can live with the DIA rewrite.

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[] "Heavy attacks" is more or less the same as "stepped-up attacks."

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[] You can take your choice there. There is going to be heavy localized attacks and that's what we are talking about. We bought your draft there. We could buy "stepped-up fighting."

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